

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----002756 071752Z /42

O P 071645Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1837  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1638  
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 9686

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS  
TAGS: PDIP, SREF, AO, CG  
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS IN ANGOLAN/ZAIRE RECONCILIATION: REFUGEES

REF: A)KINSHASA 8958, B) GENEVA 13119, C) KINSHASA 9159, D)  
KINSHASA 8876 D) LUBUMBASHI 1016 F) KINDHSA 9520 G) STATE 200867

1. SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT A VERY  
SERIOUS SITUATION IS DEVELOPING IN ZAIRE'S SHABA REGION AS  
REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS BEGIN TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES  
IN GREATER NUMBERS AND WITH MORE PRESSING NEEDS THAN PREDICTED  
EARLIER (REF A). DESPITE THE UNHCR WESTERN AFRICA DESK OFFICER

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PETERS' OPTIMISTIC STATEMENTS REPORTED REFTEL B, WE SEE NO SIGNS  
THAT UNHCR - OR ANYONE ELSE - WILL MEASURE THE FULL EXTENT OF THE  
PROBLEM WITHIN THE NEXT TEN DAYS, OR FOR THAT MATTER, IN THE FORE-  
SEEABLE FUTURE. OTHER THAN "SENSITIZING" FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO THE  
PROBLEM (REF C), THE GOZ HAS DONE NOTHING TO ORGANIZE OUTSIDE  
ASSISTANCE. AMONG UNHCR, ICRC, FRANCE AND BELGIUM, NONE ARE  
MAKING ANY COMPREHENSIVE PLANS. IN SHORT, NO ONE IS TAKING THE

LEAD. SUBJECT DESERVES URGENT ATTENTION OF USG WITH VIEW TO ANALYZING PROBLEM AND FINDING APPROPRIATE WAYS OF DEALING WITH IT. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 25, THE GOZ ANNOUNCED THAT NINE THOUSAND ZAIRIAN REFUGEES HAD ALREADY RETURNED FROM ANGOLA. WHILE WE ARE UNABLE TO CONFIRM THE GOZ CLAIM, IT IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT ZAIRIAN REFUGEES MAY BE RETURNING HOME IN MUCH GREATER NUMBERS THAN THE EMBASSY AND UNHCR HAD EXPECTED (REF A). OUR CONSULATE IN LUB-BASHI HAS REPORTED SPOT FIGURES FROM A FEW LOCATIONS ON RETURNING REFUGEES (REF E). UNHCR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE SICOTTE ADVISES THAT ACCORDING TO HIS COLLEAGUES IN LUANDA "MORE THAN 20,000 OF THE 45,000 REFUGEES" JUST IN THE MOXICO AREA OF ANGOLA HAVE INDICATED A DESIRE TO RETURN TO ZAIRE. WORLD VISION PRESIDENT MOONEYHAM WAS TOLD IN SHABA THAT AS MANY AS 600,000 REFUGEES (OR PERHAPS REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS COMBINED) MIGHT BE RETURNING HOME (REF F).

3. WE FEEL THAT MOONEYHAM GREATLY EXAGGERATES THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM. OUR OWN BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT SEVERAL TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SHABAN REFUGEES FROM ANGOLA AND DISPLACED PERSONS WITHIN ZAIRE MAY BE RETURNING TO THEIR SHABAN VILLAGES IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AND THAT MANY OF THESE RETURNEES WILL FIND THEIR HOMES LOOTED AND/OR BURNED, AND THEIR CROPS DESTROYED. IN SHORT, A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM MAY BE BREWING. HOWEVER, WE LACK THE RESOURCES WHICH WOULD ENABLE  
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US TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS IMPRESSION.

4. THE GOZ APPEARS TO HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA OF HOW MANY REFUGEES HAVE RETURNED OR ARE LIKELY TO RETURN. NOR HAS IT DONE ANYTHING TO TRY TO COORDINATE POTENTIAL INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE. ITS MAJOR ACTION VIS-A-VIS FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS WAS TO HAVE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER IDZUMBUIR CALL IN REPRESENTATIVES OF FRIENDLY WESTERN GOVERNMENTS IN ORDER TO "SENSITIZE" THEM TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM (REF C). HOWEVER, THE INFORMATION TRANSMITTED BY IDZUMBUIR AT THAT TIME BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO OUR OWN ESTIMATES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE 30,000 ZAIRIAN REFUGEES IN UGANDA; IN FACT, WE UNDERSTAND THAT REFUGEES IN THAT AREA ARE MOSTLY UGANDANS LIVING IN ZAIRE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE CONCEPT THAT NO MORE THAN 6,000 ZAIRIAN REFUGEES ARE LIKELY TO RETURN FROM ANGOLA IS CONTRADICTED BY THE GOZ ANNOUNCEMENT OF AUGUST 25 THAT 9,000 HAD ALREADY RETURNED. RESPONSIBLE OBSERVERS, INCLUDING THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, FEEL THAT THE FIGURES PROVIDED BY THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ARE PRACTICALLY USELESS.

5. UNHCR IS NOT STEPPING INTO THE BREACH. IT TAKES THE POSITION THAT IT CAN DO NOTHING TO HELP MEET ZAIRE'S DISPLACED PERSONS PROBLEM BECAUSE THE GOZ HAS NOT ASKED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

FOR A DISPENSATION FROM THE NORMAL UNHCR RULE THAT IT ONLY ASSIST REFUGEES, I.E. THOSE LIVING OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. SINCE IT HAS NO PERSONNEL IN SHABA, UNHCR KINSHASA IS NOT EVEN ATTEMPTING TO GATHER STATISTICS THERE ON THE NUMBER OF RETURNED REFUGEES. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, UNHCR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE SICOTTE WILL SHORTLY BE TRANSFERRED TO BEIRUT. WHILE SICOTTE HAS WORKED CLOSELY AND EFFECTIVELY WITH THE EMBASSY DURING HIS LESS THAN ONE YEAR ASSIGNMENT IN ZAIRE, HIS PREDECESSOR WAS INEFFECTUAL AND HIS AS-YET-UNNAMED REPLACEMENT IS AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY.

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EXDIS

6. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT NEIGHER THE LOCAL UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE NOR ICRC REPRESENTATIVES WERE INVITED TO ATTEND THE AUGUST 22 MEETING WHERE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER IDZUMBUIR "SENSITIZED" FRIENDLY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. ICRC EFFORTS HAVE LARGELY BEEN LIMITED TO ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY

THE REMAINS OF THOSE KILLED IN KOLWEZI AND TRYING TO VISIT  
PRISONERS OF WAR AND SHABANS SENT TO THE LOKANDU DETENTION CENTER  
(REF D). MOBUTU DISTRUSTS THE ICRC, IN PART BECAUSE OF CERTAIN  
ACTIONS THAT ORGANIZATION TOOK IN THE 1960'S, AND HAS SHOWN NO  
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INCLINATION TO ATTEMPT TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICES TO COORDINATE  
THE REFUGEE RELIEF EFFORT. TDY INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES (ICRC HAS NO PERSONNEL PERMANENTLY STATIONED IN  
ZAIRE) FEEL FRUSTRATED IN THEIR PRESENT EFFORTS AND CERTAINLY  
ARE NOT SEEKING ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN ZAIRE.

7. WE KNOW OF NO OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION NOW REPRESENTED  
IN ZAIRE WHICH MIGHT CONCEIVABLY ORGANIZE A PROGRAM OF ANALYZING  
THE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND ADMINISTERING ASSISTANCE. THE EMBASSY  
DOES NOT FEEL THAT THE US SHOULD ITSELF TAKE ON THE COORDINATING  
JOB. TO DO SO WOULD RAISE OUR PROFILE HERE AND MIGHT INCREASE  
OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. WITH THE LARGE  
STAKE WHICH BELGIUM AND FRANCE HAVE HERE WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE  
THOSE GOVERNMENTS TAKE THE LEAD OR AT LEAST BEAR MUCH OF THE BURDEN.  
MOREOVER, THERE IS NOW A LACK OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND INFRA-  
STRUCTURE TO CARRY OUT ANY SUBSTANTIAL PROGRAMS SUCCESSFULLY.  
WHEN THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTED TO MOUNT A REFUGEE  
RELIEF PROGRAM AFTER SHABA I, IT FOUND ITSELF WITHOUT THE NECESSARY  
FACILITIES IN PLACE. IT THEREFORE HAD TO CREATE THEM, INCLUDING  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GERMAN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, REACHING DOWN  
TO THE INDIVIDUAL REFUGEE LEVEL, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE  
RELIEF SUPPLIES REACHED THOSE FOR WHOM THEY WERE INTENDED.  
ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT REFUGEE RELIEF PROBLEM IN THE OFFING  
IS MUCH GREATER THAN THE ONE EXISTING AFTER SHABA I. WE SUSPECT  
THAT THE DIFFICULTIES IN ESTABLISHING A NEW SUCCESSFUL  
REFUGEE RELIEF PROGRAM WILL BE COMPARATIVELY EVEN GREATER.

8. THE TWO WESTERN POWERS WITH MAJOR INTERESTS IN ZAIRE,  
BELGIUM AND FRANCE, ARE TAKING A HANDS-OFF ATTITUDE. THE  
BELGIAN CHARGE, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD US THAT HE HAS NOT EVEN  
RECEIVED AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM BRUSSELS OF HIS REPORT OF  
THE AUGUST 22 MEETING CALLED BY IDZUMBUIR. FRENCH POLICY SEEMS  
ALSO TO WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE THE LEAD.

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9. CONCLUSION. NO GOVERNMENT OR INTERNATIONAL AGENCY SEEMS  
PREPARED TO COORDINATE A RELIEF EFFORT IN SHABA DESPITE THE  
FACT THAT A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION MAY BE IN THE OFFING. WHILE  
THE EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD

UNDERTAKE THIS ROLE ITSELF, A GREAT POWER WITH OUR HUMANITARIAN TRADITIONS SHOULD NOT STAND IDLY BY. WE BELIEVE THE SUBJECT OF REFUGEE RELIEF IN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE DESERVES SERIOUS ATTENTION IN WASHINGTON AND EXAMINATION DURING THE FORTHCOMING PARIS MEETING ON ZAIRE (REF G) WITH THE SAME URGENCY GIVEN THE VERIFICATION COMMISSION AND THE BENGUELA RAILROAD. WE HOPE THAT INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND MULTILATERAL DISCUSSIONS IN PARIS OR ELSEWHERE WILL LEAD TO WESTER AGREEMENT TO DESIGNATE SOME UMBRELLA ORGANISM TO COORDINATE A PROMPT STUDY OF THE PROBLEM AND AN APPROPRIATE OVERALL REFUGEE RELIEF EFFORT. THE US SHOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TOSUCH AN EFFORT.

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## Message Attributes

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